

**REMARKS**

Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the previous amendments and following remarks. Claims 1 and 3-9 are pending, with Claims 1 and 3 being independent.

Claim 3 is amended to delete the term "only". Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 3-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph is respectfully requested. Support for the amendment to Claim 3 is at page 5, lines 7-10.

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Lynch.

As amended, Claim 1 recites a fastening/unfastening method, *inter alia*, wherein a protrusion and a groove are engaged with each other by pressures applied from respective back sides of a first base and a second base, the engagement of the protrusion and the groove is canceled only by sliding the protrusion together with the first base in a direction where the protrusion has identical sections and by sliding the groove together with the second base in a direction where the groove has identical sections, and the engagement of the protrusion with the groove by pressures applied from the respective back sides of the first base and the second base is not canceled by pressures applied in directions opposite to the pressing directions for the engagement.

Lynch does not teach or suggest that engagement of the protrusion and the groove is canceled only by sliding the protrusion together with the first base in the direction where the protrusion has identical sections and by sliding the groove together with the second base in the direction where the groove has identical sections. In fact, Lynch teaches away from the combination by teaching the use of ridge 390 to specifically prevent that which Applicants are claiming. See the Manual

of Patent Examining Procedure, § 2141.02(VI), which makes clear that the prior art must be considered in its entirety, including disclosures that teach away from the claims.

Moreover, the Examiner asserts only that the Lynch device is capable of performing this step. However, the Examiner has failed to allege that Lynch's device necessarily performs this step during normal and usual operation as required for inherency of a process claim by a prior art device. See the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure, § 2112.02, first paragraph.

With regard to the recitation that the engagement of the protrusion with the groove by pressures applied from the respective back sides of the first base and the second base is not canceled by pressures applied in directions opposite to the pressing directions for the engagement, Lynch discloses in lines 40-68 of column 6, and illustrates in Figs. 8a through 8d, that engagement of rib 64 and channel 30 is canceled by pressures applied in directions opposite to the pressing directions for the engagement.

For at least these reasons, Claim 1 is allowable over Lynch, and withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 1 as being anticipated by Lynch is respectfully requested.

Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Lynch.

As amended, Claim 3 recites a plastic fastener comprising, *inter alia*, a first base and a protrusion formed on a front surface of the first base, a second base and a groove formed on a front surface of the second base, wherein the protrusion and the groove are engaged with each other by pressures applied from respective back sides of the first base and second base, and the protrusion and the groove are of

shapes which prohibit the engagement from being canceled by pressures in directions opposite to the pressing directions for the engagement.

As discussed in lines 7-10 of page 5 of this application's specification, the protrusion and the groove can be of shapes which prohibit themselves from being released from the engagement by forces in directions opposite to the pressing directions for the engagement. Accordingly, this amendment adds no new matter to Claim 3.

As disclosed in lines 40-68 of column 6 of Lynch, and as illustrated in Figs. 8a through 8d, the engagement of rib 64 and channel 30 can be canceled by pressures in directions opposite the pressing directions for engagement. Accordingly, Claim 3 is allowable over Lynch, and withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 3 as being anticipated by Lynch is respectfully requested.

Claims 3 is also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Ausnit.

As disclosed in the paragraph starting on line 59 of column 3 of Ausnit, the engagement of rib 33 and groove 34 can be canceled by pressures in directions opposite the pressing directions for engagement. Accordingly, Claim 3 is also allowable over Ausnit, and withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 3 as being anticipated by Ausnit is respectfully requested.

The dependent claims are allowable at least by virtue of their dependence from allowable Claim 3. Thus, a detailed discussion of the additional distinguishing features recited in the dependent claims is not set forth at this time.

Early and favorable action with respect to this application is respectfully requested.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference with the undersigned would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application the undersigned respectfully requests that he be contacted at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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